

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-19 (Cancelled).

20. (Previously Presented) A method for preparing a curable silicone composition, said method comprising the steps of:

a) utilizing an organic solution of an oxidation inhibitor comprising a phenol-based or triazole-based compound as a lubricating agent,

b) applying mechanical energy to a silver-based powder,

c) subjecting the silver-based powder to surface treatment with the oxidation inhibitor, and

d) incorporating the surface-treated silver-based powder into the curable silicone composition.

21. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 20 wherein the oxidation inhibitor is a triazole-based compound.

22. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 20 wherein the oxidation inhibitor is a phenol-based compound.

23. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 20 wherein the oxidation inhibitor is further defined as a hindered phenol-based compound.

24. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 20 wherein the curable silicone composition is curable with a hydrosilylation reaction.

25. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 24 wherein the curable silicone composition comprises:

(A) 100 parts by weight of an organopolysiloxane having at least two alkenyl groups per molecule;

(B) an organopolysiloxane having at least two silicon-bonded hydrogen atoms per molecule, where component (B) is present in an amount sufficient to provide silicon-bonded hydrogen atoms in an amount of 0.5 to 5 per one alkenyl group of component (A);

(C) 50 to 2,000 parts by weight of the silver-based powder, surface-treated with the oxidation inhibitor, for each 100 parts by weight of component (A); and

(D) a platinum catalyst in an amount required for promoting the hydrosilylation reaction.

26. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 20 wherein the oxidation inhibitor is present in an amount of 0.01 to 2 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the silver-based powder.

27. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 26 wherein the silver-based powder is present in an amount of 300 to 600 parts by weight for each 100 parts by weight of component (A).

28. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 20 wherein the step of applying mechanical energy is further defined as crushing, shocking, or rolling the silver-based powder.

29. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 20 wherein the oxidation inhibitor is a triazole-based compound, the step of applying mechanical energy is further defined as crushing, shocking, or rolling the silver-based powder, the curable silicone composition is curable with a hydrosilylation reaction, and the curable silicone composition comprises:

(A) 100 parts by weight of an organopolysiloxane having at least two alkenyl groups per molecule;

(B) an organopolysiloxane having at least two silicon-bonded hydrogen atoms per molecule, where component (B) is present in an amount sufficient to provide silicon-bonded hydrogen atoms in an amount of 0.5 to 5 per one alkenyl group of component (A);

(C) 50 to 2,000 parts by weight of the silver-based powder, surface-treated with the oxidation inhibitor, for each 100 parts by weight of component (A); and

(D) a platinum catalyst in an amount required for promoting the hydrosilylation reaction, the oxidation inhibitor is present in an amount of 0.01 to 2 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the silver-based powder, and the silver-based powder that is surface-treated with the oxidation inhibitor is present in an amount of 300 to 600 parts by weight for each 100 parts by weight of component (A).

Please add the following new claim:

30. (New) A method as set forth in claim 20 wherein the step of subjecting the silver-based powder to surface treatment with the oxidation inhibitor occurs after the step of applying mechanical energy to the silver based-powder.